(c) Uranium Corporation of India Limited is now operating four underground mines producing uranium ore to meet the requirement. New mines have also been planned in six more areas of which work at two sites has already been taken up.

Adequate reserves have been identified by Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research in different parts of the country. Techno-feasibility of opening new mines in these areas is also being looked into. These measures have been initiated to augment supply of projected requirement of fuel for the Atomic Energy Programme.

Import, Demand and Production of Coal

3491. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to import coal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the estimated coal reserves in the country;

(d) annual demand and production of coal in the country; and

(e) the reasons for Government not being able to produce sufficient quantity of coal from its own mines to meet the domestic requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) Import of coal is not done centrally. Since coal is under Open General Licence (OGL), consumers are free to import coal based on their requirements. It is envisaged that the gap of 41.71 million tonnes of coal as assessed by the Planning Commission, between indigenous supply and demand of coal during 2006-07 will be met to a large extent through import of coal by power, steel and cement sector and other industries.

(c) The Geological reserves of coal as on 1.1.2006 is estimated to be about 253.30 billion tonnes.

(d) The estimated raw coal demand as assessed by the Planning Commission during the year 2006-07 is 474.18 million tonnes as against the domestic supply of 432.39 million tonnes.

(e) The production of coal through indigenous sources has been increasing over the year, however, there is mismatch in demand and supply due to spurt in demand of coal on account of high rate of economic growth. Coal India Limited has taken following steps to increase indigenous production of coal.

i) 100 mining projects are envisaged to be undertaken during Tenth Plan.

ii) improvement in equipment utilization.

iii) timely implementation of projects.

iv) all new mines being planned with mechanization

v) increasing productivity in both underground and open cast mines.

vi) emergency coal production has been planned for increasing production in existing mines/projects.

Further, consumers requiring high grade of coal have to invariably import because the domestic coal is of inferior grade and high grade coal availability is limited.

Pneumoconiosis cases in coal mines

3492. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of cases of pneumoconiosis detected in coal mines in all the subsidiary of Coal India Limited and captive coal mines given to private companies during the last three years;

(b) the steps taken by the coal companies to give them adequate treatment and package of rehabilitation;

(c) the measures being taken by the coal companies to prevent recurrence of pneumoconiosis; and

(d) the role of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) As reported by Coal India Limited, total